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ABSTRACT

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, implemented through a public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of Education and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, provides grants to communities to fund public schools as community education centers. The community education centers are intended to allow students after-school access to homework centers, tutors, cultural enrichment, and recreational and nutritional opportunities. This report describes the programs and presents initial evaluation information. The report begins by detailing the need for after-school programs and the development of the 21st Century program. This section also delineates how the programs are benefiting children in numerous communities nationwide in the areas of student behavior, substance use, juvenile crime, teen pregnancies, and student grade repetition. The report then discusses the importance of locating after-school programs within school buildings to serve children where they are. The remainder of the report details characteristics of 21st Century programs, based on progress reports supplied by grantees. These reports indicated that many programs provide services for adults as well as students. About 55 percent of 21st Century projects serve rural populations; 45 percent serve inner city populations and are more likely than average schools to serve high-poverty students. About 60 percent of centers are open at least 15 hours each week. The vast majority provide activities focused on boosting achievement in core subject areas. Two thirds of the grantees also operate a summer program. Communication with the regular school day program is evident in several collaborative activities. Approximately 90 percent of the learning centers collaborate with community-based organizations. The report concludes by noting that the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program has become a powerful model that demonstrates how schools can provide expanded support for children and their families. (KB)

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ED 445 795

Soaring Beyond Expectations

21st Century Community Learning Centers

Providing Quality Afterschool Learning Opportunities for America's Families

U.S. Department of Education
September 2000

PS 028861

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September 2000

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Adriana de Kanter, Rebecca Williams, Gillian Cohen and Robert Stonehill at the U.S. Department of Education wrote this report. Data and tables were prepared by Mathematica Policy Research for the national evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

Providing Quality Afterschool Learning Opportunities for America's Families

Each of you, at your 21st Century Community Learning Centers, is bringing the magic of enriched learning opportunities to children and families in your community. You have demonstrated that you are "the best of the best."

- Statement by Richard W. Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education to the grantees at the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Summer Institute 2000

Each weekday afternoon in America, the ringing of the bell signals not just the end of the school day, but the beginning of a time when at least 8 million of our children are left alone and unsupervised. For working parents, ensuring appropriate supervision for their children during the afternoon can be an extremely difficult challenge. As a result, so-called "latch-key" youngsters can be found in our urban, suburban and rural communities where working parents, for a variety of reasons, are unable to arrange or afford a better alternative. Instead of being a time for growth and opportunity for these children, the hours immediately following the school day are their most dangerous, for these are the hours when children are most likely to commit or be the victim of crime. For many others, the afternoon hours are simply a period of idle and wasted time, when opportunities to be mentored and academically challenged are squandered.

The 21st Century Community Learning Center program, authorized under Title X, Part I, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, is a key component of the Clinton-Gore administration's commitment to help families and communities keep their children safe and smart. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers, supported by grants from the U.S. Department of Education, enable school districts to fund public schools as community education centers keeping children safe in the after-school hours. They also provide students with access to homework centers and tutors and to cultural enrichment, recreational, and nutritional opportunities. In addition, life-long learning activities are available for community members in a local school setting. Moreover, these programs provide America's parents and grandparents with something they value above almost everything else: confidence that while they are out earning a living, their children are well cared for and learning. For America's children, these programs help broaden their horizons, challenge their imaginations, and find the hero within.

Throughout the Clinton-Gore administration, the U.S. Department of Education has worked to make our children's afternoons a time when they can soar beyond expectations. The department has funded over 3,600 schools in more than 900 communities to become community learning centers. The hours that children spend at these centers are filled with academic challenges and enriching activities, supervised by responsible adults. This vision of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program has been reaffirmed by numerous evaluations of

high-quality afterschool programs, and now by the results of the current grantees' annual performance reports.[1] The grantees' experiences confirm that investing in afterschool activities makes a significant difference in the lives of America's children, families and communities.

Addressing the Needs of Children and Families

According to the report *Working for Children and Families: Safe and Smart Afterschool Programs*, published in April 2000 by the Departments of Education and Justice, 69 percent of all married-couple families with children ages 6-17 have both parents working outside the home. In 71 percent of single-mother families and 85 percent of single-father families with children ages 6-17, the custodial parent is working. The gap between parents' work schedules and their children's school schedules can amount to 20 to 25 hours per week.

Statistics provided by the General Accounting Office (GAO), the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, and other surveys show that the lack of affordable, accessible afterschool opportunities for school-age children means that an estimated 8 million -- and up to as many as 15 million -- "latchkey children" on any given day go home to an empty house after school.[2] Forty-four percent of third graders spend at least a portion of their out-of-school time unsupervised, and about 35 percent of 12-year-olds are regularly left alone while their parents are at work.

Finally, studies by the FBI and youth-advocacy groups have found that the peak hours for juvenile crime and victimization are from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. -- hours when youth are most often without supervision. Yet we know that students who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities are half as likely to use drugs and one-third less likely to become teen parents.

In over 900 communities across the nation, children now have a positive alternative to unsupervised, unstructured and uninspiring afternoons – 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

Working to Provide More Afterschool Programs

According to 1999 and 2000 public polling data from the Mott/JCPenney afterschool survey, more than 8 out of 10 voters have agreed that access to afterschool programming in the community is important, and that this access must be available to all children. Yet, over the last three years, nearly two-thirds of voters have reported that it is difficult to find programs in the nation and in the community. Less than 4 out of 10 voters say their community actually provides afterschool programs. This number has remained consistent over the last three years.

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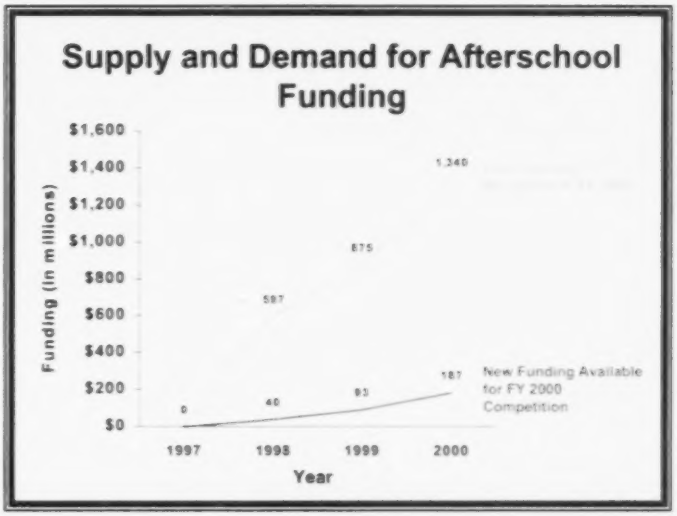
[1] Submitted in April 2000

[2] Miller, B. (June 2000). *Update of the National Child Care Survey of 1990*. National Institute on Out-Of-School Time; Seppanen, P., Kaplan de Vries, D., & Seligson, M. (1993). *National Study of Before- and After-School Programs*. Washington, DC: Office of Policy and Planning, U.S. Department of Education.

In some urban areas, the current supply of afterschool programs for school-age children will meet *as little as 20 percent* of the demand.[3] In rural areas, experts assert that the availability of school-age care could cover only about one-third of the population of children with employed parents.[4] As a result, millions of parents worry each day about where the children will go, and what they will be doing.

The Clinton-Gore Administration, through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, is working to meet some of this demand. Nevertheless, in the last grant competition administered by the U.S. Department of Education, there was sufficient funding for only 310 of the 2,253 applications. More than 1,000 high-quality applications were unfunded. With more fiscal support, more afterschool programs could be awarded 21st Century Community Learning Center grants.



Of the $1.34 billion in funding requested by schools across the nation to start afterschool programming this year, only $185.7 million was available for this fiscal year, with an additional $267 million committed to continue programs in communities which had previously received grants.

A total of $1 billion has been requested by the Clinton-Gore Administration from Congress for this initiative in fiscal year 2001. If Congress passes this appropriation level, 2.5 million children will be served through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. *This increase in funding could potentially eliminate as much as a quarter of the nation's "latch-key" problem for American families.*

To ensure that all school districts can prepare high-quality applications, the U.S. Department of Education has worked for the past three years with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the National Center for Community Education, the National Community Education Association, the National Association for Bilingual Education and other regional and local organizations to provide numerous technical assistance opportunities for communities interested in applying. Workshop attendance over the past two years has been remarkable. Some 13,000 representatives from families, schools, community and civic organizations, local governments, foundations, faith-based organizations, and businesses came together to find out what quality, extended learning is, how to collaborate, and what are some models of best practice. For this year's competition, at least one workshop was provided in every state.

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[3] United States General Accounting Office (1997, May). *Welfare Reform: Implications of Increased Work Participation for Child Care*, GAO/HEHS-97-75. Washington, DC: Author.

[4] The David and Lucile Packard Foundation (1999). When school is out. *The Future of Children, 9(2)*. Los Altos, CA: Author.

The investment in assisting local communities to plan afterschool and community education programs seems to be working. Because of the extensive training provided to potential applicants, the quality of 21st Century Community Learning Centers applications has significantly improved over the past three years. The average standardized score has gone from 72 (in 1998) to 75 (in 1999) to almost 80 (in 2000). This year, over 1,300 applications (of the 2,253 received) earned an average rating of 75 or above.

Making a Difference for America's Communities

Principals, parents, community members, and state and local decision-makers want afterschool programs because they know they keep children safe and assist them academically. Children who regularly attend high-quality programs have better peer relations and emotional adjustment, better grades and conduct in school, more academic and enrichment opportunities, spend less time watching TV, and have lower incidences of drug-use, violence, and pregnancy.[5]

Achievement data from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs are not due until October 2000. However, in April 2000, grantees – through their annual progress reports and other sources – shared the following examples of how their programs are benefiting the children in their communities:

★ The behavior of students who regularly participate in Montgomery, Alabama's three Star Search afterschool programs is improving, even though discipline problems have increased among other students. Overall, there has been a 25 percent reduction in violence.

★ At Huock Middle School in the Salem-Keizer School District in Oregon, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant has allowed for a great expansion of programs that has led to a substantial drop in the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco among students in the past year.

★ Highland Park, Michigan reported a 40 percent drop in juvenile crime in the neighborhood surrounding the 21st Century Community Learning Centers afterschool program.

★ In Plainview, Arkansas, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program implemented an abstinence program that resulted in no pregnancies in their high school graduating class for the first time in years. In 1998, there were six teen pregnancies, in 1999 there were only three, and in 2000, there were *no pregnancies* at the high school.

★ In rural McCormick, South Carolina, 120 students would have been retained in grade without the afterschool program.

★ Brooklyn, New York's Cypress Hills center reported that 72 percent of program participants improved their grades by 5 points on a 100-point scale in one or more of their classes.

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[5] *Working for Children and Families: Safe and Smart Afterschool Programs (2000).* Washington, DC: U.S. Departments of Education and Justice.

★ Participants in Chattanooga, Tennessee, showed improved school attendance. At one school, absentee days dropped from 568 days to 135; at another the drop was from 148 to 23.

★ Preliminary findings from the 21st Century Community Learning Center program in Palm Beach County, Florida, indicate that students participating in the program have increased reading and math scores, as well as interpersonal self-management.

★ In Bayfield, Wisconsin, 7th through 10th graders no longer hang out near the grocery and liquor store in the Viking Mini-Mall – instead they hang out at school after school. They finish their homework, have a snack, work on a special project or play organized games with an adult learning assistant.

Recent evaluations of other afterschool programs all found improved school attendance, and documented improved reading and/or math scores or re-designation from the status of "limited English proficient." For example:

✓ **The RAND Corporation**, when evaluating afterschool programs supported by Foundations, Inc. in the Philadelphia area, found that fourth-graders in the program outperformed comparison students in reading, language arts, and math.[6]

✓ **Columbia University**, which evaluated the Boys and Girls' Clubs of America's national educational enhancement program *Project Learn*, found that participants increased their grade average and showed improved school attendance and study skills.[7]

✓ **The University of Cincinnati**, when evaluating the Ohio Hunger Task Force's urban afterschool initiative, found fourth-graders exceeded the statewide percentage of students meeting proficiency standards in math, writing, reading, citizenship, and science.[8]

✓ **The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA)** has been evaluating the LA'S BEST afterschool program for more than 10 years. Higher levels of participation in LA's BEST led to better school attendance, which in turn related to higher academic achievement on standardized tests of mathematics, reading, and language arts. In addition, limited-English-proficient students who participated in the LA's BEST program were more likely to be redesignated as English proficient than their non-participating peers.[9]

Serving Children Where They Are

By locating 21st Century Community Learning Centers within public schools, we can see that students receive educational enrichment and academic assistance directly linked to their classroom needs. Principals have long seen a need for extended learning programs. In a 1989

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[6] Hamilton, L.S. and Klein, S.P. (1998) *Achievement Test Score Gains Among Participants in the Foundations School-Age Enrichment Program.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

[7] Schinke, S. (1999). *Evaluation of Boys and Girls' Club of America's Educational Enhancement Program.* Atlanta, GA: Author.

[8] Partners Investing in Our Community of Kids and Ohio Hunger Task Force (1999). *Urban School Initiative School-Age Care Project: 1989-99 School Year Evaluation Report.* Columbus, OH: Authors.

[9] Huang, D.,Gribbons, B.,Kim, K.S., and Lee, C. (May 2000). *The Impact of the LA's BEST After School Program on Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance.* Los Angeles, CA: UCLA.

Harris poll, 84 percent of school principals agreed that there is a need for before- and afterschool programs. In December 1999, the National Association of Elementary School Principals updated an earlier publication for their membership on quality standards for afterschool programs entitled *After-School Programs & The K-8 Principal.* In it, they recognize that "an extraordinary opportunity exists for principals to bring their schools and communities together to plan and support after-school programs."[10]

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers are located in public elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. In addition, host schools can serve a range of student grades. The table below provides information on the grade levels served in 21st Century Community Learning Centers host schools.

Grade Levels Served by 21st Century Programs

Elementary	44%
Elementary and Middle	9%
Middle	31%
Middle and High School	4%
High School	7%
All grades	7%

These 21st Century Community Learning Centers will serve about 615,000 children and youth and 215,000 adults during the 2000-2001 school year. All programs serve children, but over 40 percent have reported about how they also serve adults.

> Rural St. Mary's County, Maryland's 21st Century program serves about 100 at-risk students daily, as well adults. The program's strong adult literacy component focuses on GED preparation, computer training, counseling and career development. The St. Mary's program has been locally showcased for its development of community partnerships and use of volunteers to manage the centers. The program publishes a quarterly newsletter that features community collaborations and program success stories.

During the 2000-2001 school year, there are 903 grants operating in local school districts, with community partners, to implement public school-based 21st Century Community Learning Centers. These grants are in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants provide high-quality academic enrichment and expanded youth services in 3,610 inner-city and rural schools. School district grantees operating the programs often manage three to four school-based centers. The typical overall number of students served by a school district's grant is 696, and an average of 248 adults is served by each grantee as well.

[10] National Association of Elementary School Principals (1999). *Afterschool Programs and the K-8 Principal.* Alexandria, VA: Author.

A typical school-based 21st Century Community Learning Center serves some 156 children. As recently as 10 years ago, evaluations of afterschool programs showed as few as 50 children participating in public school programs, and even fewer in non-school-based programs[11]. This contrasts sharply with the large number of children participating in most 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and strongly suggests that the high-quality range of services that are offered, combined with the school-based setting, is effective in encouraging program participation.

Participation in 21st Century Programs

	Average Number Served
Students Served in a Local School District	696
Students Served at a Local School	156
Adults Served in a Local School District	248

The Central Maine 21st Century Community Learning Centers project had a very successful second year. Over 1,000 of the four participating schools' 2,700 students regularly engaged in the wide variety of programs and services offered.

In a Mott Foundation/JCPenney survey of registered voters conducted in June 2000, the public indicated that afterschool programs should be housed in schools and that schools and community organizations should share, rather than compete for, resources. That philosophy guides the way the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program is operated today.

Public schools, working with community partners, are the best place for afterschool programs. Not only are they convenient and reach the most children, but they are at the center of the community and in a great position to offer high-quality learning opportunities in a safe place.

--U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard W. Riley

Serving Those Most in Need

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers serve populations in rural and inner-city locales, as about 55 percent of the 21st Century projects can be considered rural and 45 percent are inner city. As recently as the 1993-1994 school year, 70 percent of all public elementary and combined (e.g., K-12) schools did not have a before- or afterschool program. This picture was even bleaker in rural areas, where 82 percent of public schools did not have such programs.[12]

Schools with 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants also serve more minority students and are far more likely to serve high-poverty students than the average school.

[11] Seppanen, et. al, 1993.

[12] National Center for Education Statistics (1996, September). *Schools Serving Family Needs: Extended-Day Programs in Public and Private Schools.* Washington, DC: Author.

Race, Ethnicity, and Poverty Level of Students in 21st Century Community Learning Centers	White	African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian, Hawaiian, Pacific Islander or Native America	High Poverty
21st Century Community Learning Centers (schools)	43%	26%	24%	6%	66%

Esmeralda, a student in the low-income school district of La Quinta, California, improved her reading level from 2.75 to 5.80 through the Computer Curriculum Corporation program that provides reading software. She spent two hours a day, four days a week, in her school's computer lab, which was funded by a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant.

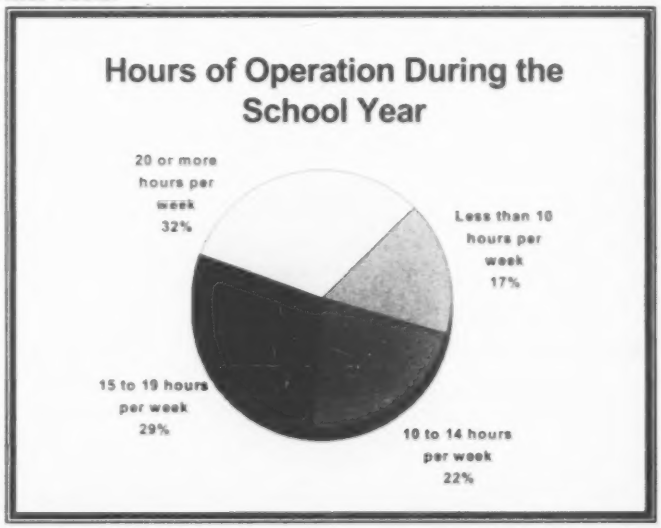
In Huntsville, Alabama, 98 percent of students at Lincoln Elementary School receive free lunch. The Camp Success program provides low-income students opportunities to participate in activities they may be unable to access such as the Kiwanis Club, 4-H, art classes, chemistry camp, the Chess Club, sports teams, and Boy and Girl Scouts.

Extending Time to Be Safe and Smart

There is strong support for afterschool from the public safety community. For example, nearly 9 in 10 police chiefs said expanding afterschool programs will "greatly reduce youth crime and violence." Nine out of 10 chiefs also agreed that "if America does not make greater investments in after-school and educational child care programs to help children and youth now, we will pay far more later in crime, welfare, and other costs."[13]

Centers provide a safe place for students to go after regular school hours end. These figures describe how much additional time is provided:

- A total of 78 percent of centers operate on a daily or semi-daily basis, and another 22 percent of centers provide only "special events" or operate on a non-daily system.
- One-third of 21st Century Community Learning Centers are open 20 or more hours per week, and 61 percent of centers are open at least 15 or more hours each week.


Hours of Operation During the School Year
20 or more hours per week 32%
Less than 10 hours per week 17%
15 to 19 hours per week 29%
10 to 14 hours per week 22%

[13] Fight Crime: Invest in Kids (November 1999). *Poll of Police Chiefs*, conducted by George Mason University professors Stephen D. Mastrofski and Scott Keeter. Washington, D.C.: Author.

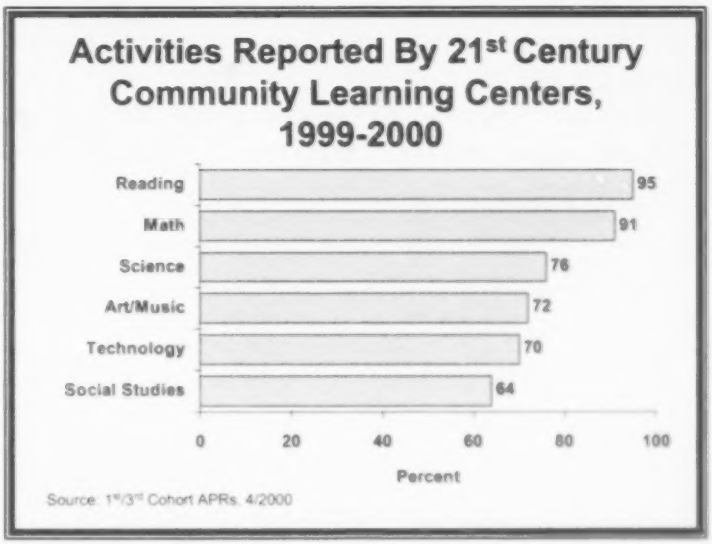
- More than one-quarter of grantees keep their learning centers open on school holidays and in-service days during the school year.

Providing Quality Afterschool Learning Opportunities

> *For students who enrolled in the Jefferson County School District After School program in Fayette, Missouri, 50 percent of those who were once below average are now average students, 10 percent are honor roll students, and 8 percent have become principal scholars.*

A June 2000 Mott Foundation/JCPenney afterschool survey asked voters what they wanted in an afterschool program. Americans said that in addition to helping working families, the most important outcomes of an afterschool program are to provide opportunities to learn and master new skills, and improve academic achievement. In addition, they identified afterschool programs as a place to build social skills and where homework can be done.

Afterschool programming sponsored by 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants gives students more time to learn, improve their academics, and engage in other educational activities outside of the structured school day. The vast majority of centers provide activities focused on boosting achievement in core subject areas, as well as offering enrichment activities.

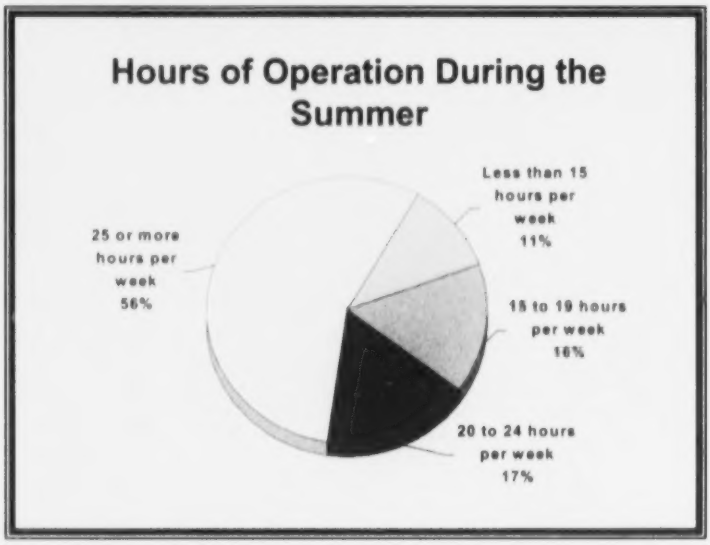


And to make sure that activities offered are of the highest possible quality, all 21st Century Community Learning Centers grantees are trained on quality elements of an afterschool program, including how best to provide academic enrichment, every fall and spring. The National Center for Community Education, funded by a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, has been providing this training.

Overall, almost all of the centers provide activities meant to bolster students' grasps of reading, math and science. Additionally, 72 percent of centers offer students access to art and music enrichment, 64 percent offer social studies support activities, 70 percent engage in technology-related activities, and 76 percent offer other types of enrichment activities.

Keeping Learning Alive in the Summer

Today, 25 percent of all school districts and 55 percent of those in high-poverty urban areas require summer school for struggling students. Not only does summer school help prevent loss of academic ground over vacation months, but it also helps close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and those with more privileged educational opportunities at home. A study done by the University of Missouri showed that in more than 85 percent of summer-school evaluations of students who attended summer classes, attendees outperformed those students who did not have this opportunity.[14]


Hours of Operation During the Summer
Less than 15 hours per week 11%
15 to 19 hours per week 16%
20 to 24 hours per week 17%
25 or more hours per week 56%

Summer schools serve a variety of purposes for students, teachers, families, and communities. They provide chances for remediation for students with learning deficits, repetition of failed courses for secondary school students, services for students with disabilities, supplemental help for disadvantaged students, enrichment opportunities for students with special talents, and a way for teachers to further their career development and increase their income.

> *In rural Monongalia County Public Schools, West Virginia, parents say the center helps their children get their homework done and conveniently offers enrichment opportunities right in their own community. Classroom teachers have commented on the amount of discussion and excitement that carries over into their classes during the day. Title I teachers were surprised at how little ground was lost for their students last summer as they were able to pick up where they had left off the previous year after participating in the summer program.*

Funding from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program allows more urban and rural schools to start summer school programs. Two-thirds of grantees operated a summer program of 25 or more hours per week, in addition to their school-year program last year.

Communicating with Teachers and Principals

Research clearly shows that quality afterschool programs coordinate their activities with those offered during the regular school day. Communicating with the principal and the teachers in the regular school program regarding subjects like recruitment strategies, program goals and student progress is essential to establishing a successful afterschool program. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers grantees understand the importance of these day-to-day linkages

[14] Cooper, H., Charlton, K., Valentine, J. (1998). *Making the Most of Summer School: A Meta-Analytic and Narrative Review*. University of Missouri-Columbia.

with the regular school day program, as shown in the collaborative activities they are undertaking.

Types of Linkages to School Day Program	Percent of Grantees
Recruit/Refer Students	95%
Works at Program	93%
Provide Feedback on Students	93%
Set Goals and Objectives	92%
Share Instructional Practices	90%
Communicate School-Day Curricula to Center Staff	89%

Creating Collaborating Communities

In Kenosha, Wisconsin, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers became involved with the Lincoln Neighborhood Community Center and collaborated with many other community organizations to provide families with a full-range of services.

- *The University of Wisconsin Extension Service offered a teen pregnancy prevention program.*
- *The Spanish Center and the United Migrant Opportunities Services offered a cultural awareness class.*
- *The Kenosha Library stopped their bookmobile in front of the centers each week.*
- *The American Red Cross certified the students in babysitting.*
- *The University of Wisconsin-Parkside offered weekly swimming lessons in their pool, leadership classes, student interns, admissions to college plays, peer mediation, and neighborhood assistance, specifically safety and improvement.*
- *The Girl Scout Council wrote a grant so they could start troops in both 21st Century schools.*
- *A family drug and alcohol program was offered in cooperation with about 10 community agencies.*

Collaboration helps build a common sense of community with mutual goals and vision. Collaboration is a cornerstone of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. Rural and inner-city public schools — in collaboration with other public and non-profit agencies, faith-based organizations, local businesses, postsecondary institutions, scientific and cultural organizations, and other community entities — benefit from the U.S. Department of Education funding for afterschool programs. All centers must work with community partners and faculty of the regular school program to achieve a variety of goals.

Some 90 percent of 21st Century Community Learning Centers grantees report partnering with community-based organizations. Roughly one-third of grantees report partnering with faith-based organizations. Grantees say that they involve partners in service delivery. An informal survey of grantees suggests that about two-thirds of the grantees have entered into

contracts with community-based organizations to provide program services. Grantees estimate that these contracts average to about 25 percent of total grant funding.

On average, 21st Century Community Learning Centers work with six community partners to provide services, share techniques for conducting activities, set goals and objectives, provide volunteer staffing, give feedback on students, make paid staff available, and raise funds (in order of most common to least common shared activity). Activities undertaken by community partners in 21st Century Community Learning Centers can be found in the table below:

Types of Activities Undertaken by Community Collaborators	Percent of Grantees
Provide Services/Goods	80%
Share Techniques	77%
Set Goals and Objectives	73%
Provide Volunteer Staffing	72%
Provide Feedback on Students	70%
Provide Paid Staffing	68%
Raise Funds	39%

Creating a Unique Partnership to Support Afterschool Programs

In large part, the unprecedented growth and quality of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program can be traced to a philosophy of collaboration. The program is implemented nationally through a unique public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of Education and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation of Flint, Michigan. Conceived following the 1997 White House Child Care Conference, the partnership today accounts for more than $550 million in direct services, training, technical assistance, best practices identification, evaluation, and access/equity and public will activities. This is far above what would have been available by relying exclusively on federal funds.

The U.S. Department of Education administers the program and supplies funds to local communities through a competitive proposal process. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation underwrites training and technical assistance, and provides training on how to create high-quality applications and implement community learning centers. In addition, the C.S. Mott Foundation funds program evaluations, access and equity analyses, and public awareness and outreach initiatives. Mott funding leverages federal funds and works toward the long-term sustainability of local projects.

Frankly, this historic partnership between the U.S. Department of Education and the Mott Foundation is a symbol of the full spectrum of public and private partnerships that we can expect to spring to life as this initiative is embraced by communities all over the United States.

-- William S. White, President, C.S. Mott Foundation

The collaboration concept is mirrored at the local level. Every school district is required to work with community organizations like law enforcement agencies, local businesses, post-secondary institutions, and scientific, cultural or youth-serving groups. This collaboration encourages the community to unite in helping children develop into healthy, successful adults. It also allows communities the freedom to design school-based programs around their needs and interests as long as they contain a strong learning component.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation—U.S. Department of Education partnership has led to the creation of the *Afterschool Alliance*. The Afterschool Alliance is a coalition devoted to raising awareness and expanding resources for afterschool programs. It includes the U.S. Department of Education and the C.S. Mott Foundation, as well as JCPenney, the Advertising Council, Entertainment Industry Foundation, and Creative Artists Agency Foundation. The Afterschool Alliance's vision is to see that every child in America has access to quality afterschool programs by 2010. Toward this end, the Afterschool Alliance has secured millions of dollars in direct and in-kind contributions for programs such as:

- a national public service advertising campaign ("Finding the Hero Within"),
- a national day of recognition on October 12 ("Lights on Afterschool!"), and
- the identification and deployment of a cadre of practitioner "Afterschool Ambassadors" in every state to provide technical assistance and influence public will.

In Conclusion—

Afterschool programs are popular, effective in keeping kids safe and providing children with constructive opportunities to learn and grow, and are in great demand across the country. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program has become a powerful model that demonstrates how schools can provide expanded support for children and their families. Nevertheless, the current supply of afterschool programs is not able to serve all of the children who want or need a safe and smart place to be after their schools have closed for the day. A total of 2,253 communities, representing 10,000 of our nation's schools, participated in this year's competition for 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants. They did so despite the fact that only one in seven applications could be funded.

The president and vice-president have requested that funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers be dramatically increased, from its current FY 2000 level of $453 million to $1 billion in FY 2001. At that amount, the program will be able to assist 2,000 communities establish 8,000 schools as 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Partnering with local organizations and businesses, these centers would be able to serve up to 2.5 million children, or up to one-quarter of all the country's latchkey children. No single program can meet the needs of our children -- attaining that goal will take the combined efforts of families, schools, youth-development organizations, faith-based groups, foundations, businesses, and federal, state, and local agencies. Increasing our investment in the 21st Century Community Learning Center program would be a step in the right direction.

Contact Us!

For more information on the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, contact the U.S. Department of Education at:

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- Fax: (202) 260-3420

Why are afterschool programs so important?
Because children's minds don't close down at 3 p.m., and neither should their schools.

U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard W. Riley